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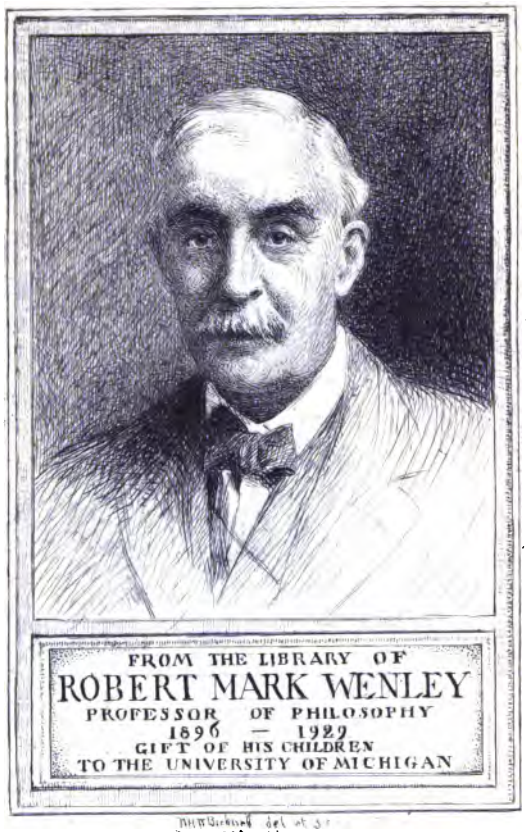
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TOWNS and TYPES

By

Mark Allerton

London: Houlston & Sons
Edinburgh and Glasgow:
John Menzies & Co.

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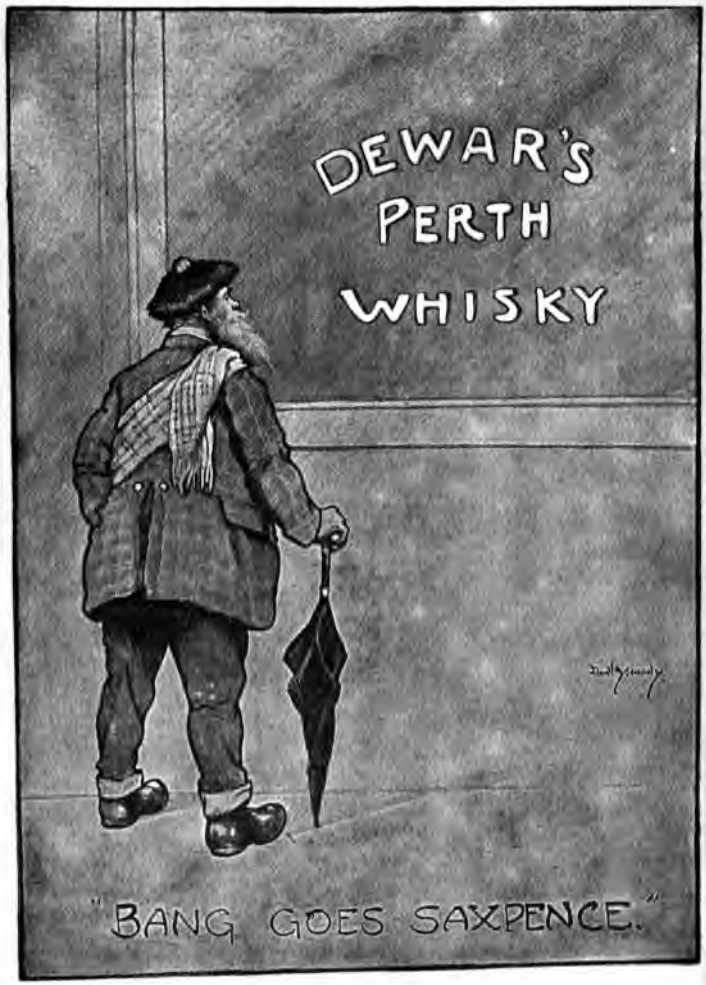
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TOWNS AND TYPES

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PREFACE

WHEN certain of the following articles appeared some time ago several friends who live in London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Manchester, and Dundee did me the honour of criticising them. They said they were true in parts. It may be interesting to know that they acknowledge the truth of all that is complimentary. According to them I seem to have gone wrong when I ventured to find fault. They advised me to re-write the articles and eliminate certain statements. I have done so, and have drawn my pen through much that was complimentary. But let these good folk console themselves. These are only the opinions of a random scribbler who does not love the towns any the less because they are not perfect.

M. A.

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London

I.—From Without

To the provincial with a little money, imagination, and ambition, London is the Mecca towards which he turns his steps when the joys of his native place begin to pall. On his first visit it means the Tower, St. Paul's, Westminster, and a score more places of compulsory entertainment and instruction, finishing up with the British Museum and Madame Tussaud's. After his next visit he will be able to brag about the time he saw Tree in *The Tempest*, or young Irving in *Hamlet*, or Gertie Miller in *The Orchid*. He will discriminate between the better-known Soho restaurants. And he will be enthusiastic over the fact that he saw the Prince at the Church Parade on Sunday. The third time he goes South he is a Man About Town, who can find his way from Ludgate Hill to Leicester Square without having recourse

to a policeman more than half a dozen times. It is then that he begins to have views on the City and its life.

I cannot presume to write of London from within. I am sorry for the man who can. Some have tried it, and have failed more or less gloriously. To know London you must have lived in it over a hundred years, starved in it, worked in it, played in it, been good in it, and gone to the devil in it.

London is not a city; it is a hundred cities. It is not the capital of England; it is the capital of the world. It is not rich, for wealth above a certain amount deserves a wider name. It is not poor, for that cannot explain its poverty. It is just London, unique, shrouded with a glamour that takes our eyes from its defects.

It is a city of a few fine buildings and a great many poor ones. You can't imagine how shoddy a city of bricks looks when you have lived for years in a city of granite and greystone. It is like the cities on the Continent with the paint rubbed off.

A city where you can rent a mansion-house at a lower figure than a pokey flat is

full of surprises. That mysterious fetish "the Correct Thing" can be disregarded only by millionaires and failures. When you can afford it you leave your pleasant house in the suburbs, to live in a dingy little street off Piccadilly, because it is "the Correct Thing." You sell your pair of chestnuts, and drive in an electric brougham, because it is "the Correct Thing." You talk slang, you become *blasé*, you spend double your income, you are to be found with all the herd in certain places at certain times, because it is "the Correct Thing." And if you can't do these things—if you are forced to live in Bayswater when the other side of the Park is "the Correct Thing"—you pine your poor little soul away in envy, and talk maliciously of the "smart set." One-half of London is doing what it oughtn't, and the other half is wishing it could do the same.

Commercially, London is becoming Americanised. We wear American boots, puff our goods with American advertisements, put up in American hotels, go to American theatres to see American plays played by American players, read

newspapers run on the American plans, and sometimes eat American dishes in American restaurants. Our Cockneys will soon be talking with an American accent.

The City is a tragedy. Narrow streets, thronged with pale, anxious men hurrying to and fro; the lust for money, or the desperate desire to live, can be traced on every face. Early in the morning these hordes come pouring from the outlying districts. Like myriads of bees, each with its own little cell up in these grimy buildings, they rush in and out, feverishly striving to gather honey. The streets throb with the intensity of life. Ten thousand headaches, ten thousand weary brains, despairing souls, a few tyrant hands, and a million slaves. What are these? "Business," that's all. And what is the use of it? Why do these people throw themselves into the fight each morning to return exhausted at night to worry over what they might have done, and what may happen on the morrow? Why? To earn a living. Think of that, ye ambitious souls, fretting amid country lanes! Think of that, when the magnetism of London

lures you into its grasp, and stay at home. London will either break your spirit or destroy your soul. I hate the City; hate it, because it is cruel and selfish; hate it, because it is unlovely and foul and wicked, with a mean, gross wickedness.

I have seen business men wearing lounge jackets and silk hats in London. I suppose these are the people who come up to Scotland in kilts, and wear their stockings pulled over their knees.

In some ways you can save money in London. You can dress cheaply, dine cheaply, and smoke cheaply, and the better you know your London the more cheaply can you do those things.

London, on its lighter side, is bewilderingly delightful—if you are not hard up. Its splendid theatres, talented actors, gorgeous music halls, clever artists, palatial supper-rooms, cosy clubs, all open their doors to the man with money. To the provincial with his travelling companies, and Early Closing Act, all this is very exhilarating, but most novel of all is the glamour of the streets. London street traffic is typical of London life. It goes at a trot. 'Buses,

hansoms, growlers, carts, drays move smartly along. The lumbering lorry of other cities is conspicuous by its absence, and good paving is presumably the reason. When the country cousin finds himself in Euston Road, and hears the tinkling of the harness bells, the pat-pat, pat-pat of the horses' hoofs, the hoarse invitations of the 'bus conductors, the cries of the newsboys, he gathers up his bags and enters into the spirit of the thing. There must be no stopping: rush, push, knock a man down, and apologise (you must be polite in London), get on. You may have three-score and ten years here. Then fill them full, live as fast as you can, and die either in Belgravia or Colney Hatch. That is the plan of your days in London.

But a good deal of all this rush and worry in London is mere nervous excitement. If the Londoner took things quieter he'd get there all the same. But he has got worked up, partly by the knowledge that he has been a bit slack of late, partly because of the wave of Yankeeism, and wild horses won't stop him now.

With all his work, however, the Londoner enjoys himself more than do other English-speaking people. At least, he enjoys himself in a more reckless fashion. Some one has said that life would be tolerable were it not for its amusements. Take away a Londoner's amusements, and you deprive him of all that makes his life. He will lunch off milk and a bun for a week so that he may go up the river on Sunday. If there aren't music halls in the next world, he will weary dreadfully.

I think I may truthfully say, without infringing the copyright of any of the multitudinous tracts in circulation, that London is one of the wickedest places on earth. The outsider sees on every hand profligacy and vice rampant, unashamed, and clad in silk attire. As it is impossible he can know the worst, Heaven help London!

The typical Londoner is a slight man, nicely dressed, with one ring too many, a pale complexion, and knowing eyes. He puts "Tatcho" on his hair, and swears by the *Referee*. He is a good fellow to meet, for he is courteous, polite, worldly-wise,

with a fine sense of humour and a ready laugh. He calls you "Scotty," and thinks you wear kilts when at home, and live on porridge and oatcake. He is always enthusiastic about some trifle, but his enthusiasm never lasts long. He will become a passive resister, and throw bricks at an auctioneer, and then quarrel with his best friend who ventures to disapprove of the doings of Messrs. Balfour and Chamberlain. Half an hour after you meet him you will know his income, the name of his wife, and how he spends his Sundays.

In a 'bus he will carry on a conversation loud enough to be heard across Oxford Street. If you listen to him you will learn what he has had for dinner, his views on cricket, and his fancy for the Autumn Meeting; that little Harry has cut another tooth, and the latest thing he has learnt to say. He thoroughly believes all this to be very interesting to the other occupants. "Cockyness" is the predominant trait in his character. He loves royalty, revels in processions, and is generous to a fault.

If you wish to borrow money go to a

London man; if you want some one to do you a service, don't. He will ask you bluntly what there is in it for himself. And in these days of an impecunious aristocracy it is not safe to ask a man with a handle to his name if he thinks it will rain. You will have to entertain him afterwards.

London

II.—The Far East

SOME time ago readers of a London daily were treated to a little three-cornered quarrel between that paper and two journalists. One of the latter had written a lurid article on the immorality and squalor of the East End of London. The other, Mr. I. Zangwill, took up the cudgels and, reinforced by Mr. John Burns, pointed out what a very lovely district lay east of the Bank. The daily in question supported the latter view, and characterised the lurid article as "Slum Sensationalism." The term was fairly accurate, as the facts (if they were facts) were put forward in that manner peculiar to the new journalism. The result provided copy for the silly season, and probably afforded amusement to the writers.

As a matter of fact, one man may visit the East End and pronounce it a hot-

bed of vice, misery, and degradation, while another may see in it much that is lovely and be impressed thereby. Both are right. For myself, I know the Far East merely as it strikes the casual wayfarer. I visited it a long time ago as one of the sights, and came away with altered opinions of it. And, although I have been there often since, I have seen no reason to change these opinions.

The district begins at the Bank, which is the farthest East the man from Piccadilly has ever penetrated. People go there after having read "The Abyss," and certain of the late Sir Walter Besant's books, and wonder if they really ought to get a policeman to escort them. They walk through Whitechapel shivering with anticipation of the scenes which will remind them of Jack the Ripper, and are surprised to find thoroughfares as busy as Argyle Street in Glasgow or Oxford Road in Manchester, but broader, cleaner, better paved, and as well lit. The braver leave these thoroughfares and go up side streets, such as Flower and Dean Streets, and are only too glad when the time comes for them to get back

to Aldgate and take the train to Charing Cross. These are the nervous people with imaginations. For my part, I believe that it is necessary to have a vivid imagination of the new journalistic order to write of the vice of the Far East.

It may be due to my inexperience, but I should rather walk alone anywhere in the East End at night than in Soho. I believe it to be safer—if there can be any comparison of danger between two brilliantly lit and densely populated districts. I have been "Down East" late at night, and was struck only by the cheerful aspect of the place—I mean, in comparison with what you might expect.

The Far East is Slumland, of course. It is poor—desperately poor, I have no doubt, and a disgrace to our Christian civilisation. But I think that if the journalists of Slumland would visit some of our other large cities, would visit, for example, the Glasgow and particularly the Edinburgh slums, they would alter their opinion of the Far East of London.

Here is an illustration:—

Afraid lest my exalted opinion of the

Far East was due to my ignorance, I secured one night the services of a friend who knows the East like a book and who took me round. We got off the 'bus at the "Wonderland," and from thence pried into all sorts of odoriferous side streets and alleys. One or two houses were pointed out to me as the scenes of notorious murders. I gazed on their calm respectability, and they thrilled me about as much as does the "Chamber of Horrors" in Madame Tussaud's. The houses were poor, not tall tenements like one sees in Glasgow, but small, two-storeyed buildings for the most part. The windows were open, and one could see that they were often comfortably furnished. At the doors sat women with babies. Men smoked pipes beside them. In some cases the rooms were full of people hard at work. It is probable that the sweater and poverty had these in their grip. But what does one expect to find in Slumland? Dinner and bridge parties? I have no wish to appear callous about the condition of the poor. But I do not think it is right or fair to malign a neighbourhood the majority of

whose occupants can compare favourably with the poor of any city I know.

In the streets were barrel organs without number, and round each were a group of children dancing. And how they danced! I watched four tiny little girls for about a quarter of an hour going through the mysteries of the cake walk, and I am certain that they danced far more skilfully and nimbly than any I have seen on the stage. Of course they ought to have been in bed, for it was after eleven o'clock, and the oldest could not have been more than ten! But where in Glasgow or Edinburgh or Manchester will you find groups of happy children dancing, and dancing well, to the strains of a nigger breakdown? Certainly not in the Haymarket, or Saltmarket, or Bridgeton, near midnight.

Some of the houses, even in the poorest streets, bore the marks of careful attention, and several were covered with Virginian creeper.

My friend was rather disgusted when I told him that he had shown me nothing in the way of slums to come up to what we had in Glasgow, and proposed taking me

to the docks. In the streets by the river desolation reigned supreme. Nobody was about. I daresay we were too late.

I was, however, impressed by one or two things. I spent that night from nine o'clock till after midnight in the East End and never saw a single drunken man. Glasgow public-houses shut at ten o'clock, but can Glasgow point to a result like that?

Again, in Whitechapel, with its throng of wayfarers, nearly every passer-by was a Hebrew. Many, perhaps I should say most of them, were aliens. Old men with seedy frock-coats and tall hats, the types of the comic artist and the stage, slouched past; fat Jewesses, whose taste for jewellery was clearly more for quantity than for quality, took an airing with their black-eyed, dark-haired husbands. Girls streamed past in twos and threes, laughing and talking to their Semitic friends. They were all Jewesses. And for good looks they would easily have carried off the palm from us mediocre Christians. In fact, I never saw so many really beautiful girls as I did that night in Whitechapel. The pity is

that the beautiful Jewess in a few years becomes—well, not beautiful.

I suppose the East End is vicious. Writers who ought to know tell us that it is. But in my opinion there is more virtue in a square mile of Whitechapel at night than in a dozen square yards "Up West" at the same hour. And I believe I am right.

I left the Far East with my friend shortly after midnight. The streets were fast emptying, and those who remained loitering about were men. Then we made our way West. As we passed a celebrated "supper" hotel in Regent Street, men and women were scrambling into hansoms. The majority were in evening dress; many were flushed a little. Champagne has a way of its own, you know. Piccadilly was full, and the majority of those there were women. The clubs were full of men reading the papers and smoking. Can it be that the people of the West have less comfortable homes than those of the East? Else why do they frequent them so little?

I see from the papers that a clergyman

here has given up a good charge to take up a mission to the rich. Why do not more follow his example, and, leaving the virtuous East alone, turn their attention to the luxurious and selfish West?

London

III.—"Up West"

"UP WEST" is a district which as yet has not found its way on to the map of London. Nevertheless, it is as truly a division of the town as Belgravia or Bloomsbury, and it is far better known. It begins about the Tivoli, in the Strand, and, missing out Trafalgar Square, includes the principal streets from Pall Mall to Oxford Street, and from Hyde Park Corner to Leicester Square. When "Up West" is empty, save for Yankees and country cousins and a number of foreigners, the Society papers say that "everybody is out of town."

All the best restaurants are to be found "Up West." The theatres whose names are sufficient to make it the "Correct Thing" to see any play which may be produced in them are all there. "Up West" after dusk is a mystery of lights and beautiful women

and dashing hansoms and wealth and pleasure. "Up West" comprises all the London that it is good form for the Man About Town to know. People from the provinces go "Up West" to see life, and come away hoping that nobody they know saw them there.

On boat race night Oxford and Cambridge students go "Up West," just as after a Students' Night in Glasgow the fried-fish shops in Sauchiehall Street do a roaring (that is the correct adjective) trade. Now that "Jimmy's" has gone, there are many people wandering about "Up West" mourning a lost rendezvous. The Londoner speaks of "Jimmy's" as a lost friend. Sensitive people say "Up West" is as bad as Paris. They are wrong. It is worse. Still, "Up West" is popular. The provincial who comes to London for a week-end may always be found within a hundred yards of the Alhambra about an hour after his arrival.

"Up West" does not believe in copy-book maxims. It wakens up about nine o'clock, rubs the sleep off its eyes about ten, is strenuously awake at eleven, and is

stifling its first yawn long after midnight, when the restaurants close.

"Up West" is expensive. There is a story which you must have heard before about a Scot who went into a West-End restaurant and asked for a small whisky. He put down twopence on the table, which the waiter pocketed, but still remained. "A shilling, please," he said. The Scot was aghast. "Look at all these pictures and statues," explained the waiter; "you can't get these for twopence." The Scot agreed. Next night he went into the same restaurant and ordered another drink. Hastily drinking it, he gave the waiter twopence. "Here ye are, ma mannie," he said. "I saw yer picters last nicht." If you don't know where to go you can get a jolly little supper "Up West" for a guinea, including a bottle of champagne, *Chateau de* Lower Belgravia. And in the restaurants you can meet some quite nice people. At least, they look nice.

"Up West" is decadent. Describe "Up West" to a provincial, and he will not believe you. Take him to see it, and he is indescribably shocked. The Londoner

does not understand it. He does not realise that life "Up West" is the canker in the heart of a noble city.

"Up West" is ill-informed on important topics. I dare say that not a dozen men in Piccadilly Circus to-night ever heard of the Free Church Case. More have heard about the War, for there were cinematograph views of it in the Alhambra. But any one can tell you who is "on" at the Pavilion and the price of a bottle of Bass at the "Cri."

We are a great nation, we British, and London is our capital. People from the provinces go "Up West" to see the play. Then they go home and boast about it. When their friends tell them that they saw the same play on tour they sneer at them. "You can't see anything worth out of London," they say, with their minds full of a comedian and comedienne whose notoriety is almost as great as their conceit, and without whose photographs no illustrated weekly is complete. All of which proves that the people from the provinces have something to learn. People who think are beginning to realise that it is not necessary

to scamp one's dinner, and pay half a crown for a cab and half a guinea for a seat in order to see what may be called "The Girl from Go-ga-go" in all its glory. And since they will not go to the "Girl" the "Girl" comes to them—in the suburban theatre round the corner, which is larger, more handsome, more luxurious, and where the seats are cheaper than in any West End theatre.

"Up West" is also Clubland. When you read in comic papers about the naughty men who spend their evenings at their clubs, don't believe a word of it. The man who would spend an evening at a club is an elderly, quiet, *Spectator*- or *Speaker*-reading sort of man. True it is that there are sporty clubs, where men play bridge for higher stakes than they can afford, but that they are the rowdy-dowdy, gay-dog places some would have you believe is, of course, quite untrue.

Talking about bridge leads me to note that this game is still as virulent as ever. I can take a hand myself, but I shouldn't admit it for worlds. I can't afford to. "Up West" nobody would dream of

playing "for love." I heard a man who played poker at twopence a dozen spoken of as a very careful person, the sort of man that might be held up by the *Daily News* as a pattern for the one in ten people who, according to the "Best" paper, attend church.

Were it not for the saddening sight of the streets "Up West" would be beautiful. When an autumn crispness is in the night air, and the moon shines clear and cold in the dark sky, making the huge white crescent of Regent Street almost fairy-like in its splendour and glamour, London is a dream city which holds one fast in voluptuous intoxication.

Yes; "Up West" is very beautiful.

Edinburgh

EDINBURGH would be perfect were it not for its citizens and the east wind. Both are capable of withering up the bold stranger who ventures to visit its beauties.

It is a good thing that Glasgow and Edinburgh are separated by over 40 Scotch miles. If they were closer, Heaven help the weaker!

Edinburgh thinks Glasgow vulgar, ill-mannered, purse-proud, and entirely objectionable. Glasgow deems Edinburgh an unmitigated snob, fit only to be sneered at in idle moments. But Edinburgh is not so bad when you get to know it, if it takes a lot of knowing.

Imagine a long, wind-swept street, with large hotels on one side and spacious gardens on the other, the ancient castle frowning down upon all, and you have Princes Street. The roadway is filled

with rattling, jolting cable cars, motors, and the carriages of the poor but eminently respectable retired Government and legal officers from Moray Place and Heriot Row. The pavement is crowded with fatuous-looking men and well-dressed women, whose noses shine like beacons in the blast. These hail from Parliament House and Morningside, and when they are at home, their butler serves up the hot roast on Sunday, cold on Monday, hash on Tuesday, mince patties on Wednesday, and shepherd's pie on Thursday. On Friday and Saturday they will dine with a friend. At least, that is what their appearance would lead one to believe.

People take life easy in Edinburgh. It is an old saying, that when an Edinburgh man wishes to cross the street he will roll up his trousers and go round by the crossing. A Glasgow man will splash right across. I daresay there is some business done, but unless you look for them you will never see any men with the appearance of doing any. Every man is either an advocate, solicitor, or is living on his pension. The very atmosphere is

charged with Law, with a dash of Literature.

This, of course, has its effect on the society. The literary *dilettante*, the King's Counsel, the man o' pairts—these are the most welcomed in Edinburgh drawing-rooms. Pedigree also goes a long way. There is enough blood down Charlotte Square way to turn the Firth of Forth blue.

Edinburgh is also a very churchy place. After the Edinburgh girl has learnt her Debrett by heart, she has to make herself proficient in the canons of church government, and in the names of the incumbents of every parish within the county, with their genealogy, a list of their predecessors and *their* genealogy. The last time I was in an Edinburgh restaurant a lady and gentleman were seated opposite. I could not help hearing what they were talking about. The lady was passing some criticism on the Yorkshire pudding, when she broke off with, "Do you know that next Sunday is our Communion?" I am sure she had no idea that her question was out of place. If you whistle on a Sunday

in Edinburgh there is a score at least of worthy people praying for you in the church in the intervals between examining the apparel of the people in front and speculating on how much their neighbours will put in the collection box.

And yet bands play, and people golf on Sunday in Edinburgh!

Municipal enterprise is in a backward state there. Many years ago, Mr. Usher, a well-known local gentleman, left in his will a large sum of money to build a hall. I am not sure if the Corporation have yet got a site for the building, and this in a city boasting of hundreds of acres of vacant land. The cable cars have also been a source of merriment to Glasgow people, who pride themselves on the fact that Chicago has borrowed their tramway manager. These must be seen—especially where there is a bend in the line—to be believed.

The spirit of the past clings firmly to the city and its surroundings. Perhaps this is one reason why the people are not as up-to-date as they might be. At almost every turn you are confronted with some

building or landmark that conjures up in your imagination those stirring days when Scottish pike and English lance met in battle in the streets, or when John Knox stalked with austere glance down the Canongate, or when a gay band of courtiers rode out from Holyrood to do the bidding of Prince Charlie, and ducked their heads in apprehension at the warning cry of "Gardy Loo!" How can a man be expected to deal efficiently with commonplace, work-a-day affairs of commercial life when he has been brought up amid such surroundings?

Just as no one will deny that for beauty and romance Edinburgh has not a peer in the world, so no one, save an Edinburgher, will dispute the assertion that the citizens of Modern Athens are about as priggish a set as you will find outside a crack cavalry regiment. Still, once you get to know them—and, as I hinted before, only the brave can succeed—you will find that they have their virtues. They are honourable, self-constrained, little given to exaggeration, cultured, and correct. If an Edinburgh man says a thing is so, you may safely bet

on it. The trouble is he very seldom ventures on an assertion, but prefaces his remarks with "I think," or "In my opinion." He plays safety, and leaves double baulk every time.

The University is a strong factor in Edinburgh life. Not only are its professors and lecturers men of weight, whose frown would clear Princes Street from Leith Walk to Queensferry Road, but the students are gay dogs whom it does one good to meet. The pity is that many of them grow into Edinburgh men. The fashionable bars in Edinburgh owe their existence to the University *alumni*, for no elderly man would risk his reputation as a pillar of virtue and an elder in the kirk by walking abroad with an odoriferous breath.

With all its sanctimoniousness and high ideals there is a touch of decadence about the life in Edinburgh. In Glasgow one may have little fear in allowing one's wife, sister, or daughter to walk abroad unescorted after nightfall; but in Edinburgh you will advise your lady friends well if you bid them stay at home. There are quite enough unescorted females there

already of the sort that figure in police reports as "described as actresses."

For general harmlessness, however, Edinburgh people are, as a rule, conspicuous. The home life is all that it should be, the members of the family living in happy unity one with another, the *paterfamilias*, a good and a grave man, proud in the simple belief that he is of the chosen people, and that wisdom will die with him; his wife prim, plainly dressed in black silk (Edinburgh ladies will wear black silk when the rest of us are being awarded white raiment), devoted to her husband, and with an exalted opinion of his importance and, consequently, of her own. The sons are decent-living fellows when there's somebody looking, quiet and unobtrusive. You sometimes wish you could enliven them up a bit with a squib at their coat tails. The girls are domesticated, and quite sensible. Their ambition is to marry clever young clergymen; their principal delight, strawberries and cream, or a raspberry ice in a West End café.

Edinburgh is peopled to a large extent

with army officers on half-pay and superannuated Government officials. They, having lived all their lives in an atmosphere of precise red-tapeism, come to the Grey City, where they may die amid congenial surroundings, their coat of arms representing a carriage and pair and a salt herring rampant. And, taking it all round, there is no reason why Edinburgh should not make an extremely desirable place in which to die.

The above article is taken almost bodily from a well-known London weekly. It appeared there along with several other articles on our large towns. In all these articles I ventured, for the good of the towns, to point out their faults. They were received in chastened silence. But when this Edinburgh article made its appearance great was the wrath of Auld Reekie. The editor was bombarded with letters, and eventually had to close the correspondence. I wish I had kept those letters. I should have printed them here. They were far funnier than anything I could write. My every assertion was disputed or flatly denied.

My critics could not have been harder on me if I had split an infinitive or written an "and which." They railed because I described Princes Street as "wind-swept." What is wrong with that? I was asked. I believe they thought I meant to insinuate that a wind-sweeping was all that Princes Street ever got.

And when I wrote that people golf there on Sunday, they declared I lied. Can it be that Edinburgh does not extend as far as Barnton Links? I appended a footnote to "Gardy Loo"—"Spelling and derivation unknown." Immediately a dozen flew to their pens to show up my crass ignorance. In Edinburgh it is not thought wise to describe the objectionable as "unknown."

One man, whose letter took up a page and a half of small type, was wroth because I hinted at decadence. He declared that Edinburgh was purity itself. He had lived there all his life, so he ought to know. Thank Heaven! I have not lived in Edinburgh as long as that, but occasional visits have forced me to believe that Princes Street and Piccadilly have too much in common.

I must now add another adjective to describe Edinburgh—it is painfully and blindly conceited. "Nemo me impune lacessit," it snorts over its thin dinner claret, "Who is this that dares find fault with me?" My dear Auld Reekie, you are a hypocrite, a dreadful hypocrite. You know you are. Even your name is a misnomer. You are not "reekie." You are as clear and bracing as you are beautiful and fair. You are a fit habitation for gods. Your Arthur's Seat inspires one to do noble things. Your classic Calton Hill and frowning castle awaken stern resolves, and with all that you are a sham. Oh, for shame! You are all pretence. You sit in your gloomy dining-room and thank God that you are a descendant of the MacClavertys of Claverty, or that you have been endowed with brains—such brains! You are self-centred, self-loving, self-admiring. If you were a really wicked people one might be sorry for you. But you are not even that. I wonder the poor of the city can stand you, and do not rise in their indignation and drive you to the Pentlands. But I suppose they are

Edinburgh people too. Edinburgh is not for such as you. Go out of it, and let in new, generous-hearted, sympathetic folk who deserve its beauty. Never mind if they don't go to church twice on Sunday, never mind if they've made their money by the sweat of their brow, never mind if their accent isn't like the fourfold "Amen." So long as they aren't hypocrites with a cold in their heads let them in.

Surely, I have been asked, all Edinburgh people are not as you have described them? Of course not. It is for your sake, O Edinburgher! and for the sake of your friend from whom you borrowed this book, that Edinburgh is spared. I know many capital Edinburgh people, but I write of them *en masse.*

I don't like Edinburgh. My dear man from Merchiston, pray forgive me. You are not the reason why. But all the other people are.

Glasgow

GLASGOW is being well boomed by Pressmen nowadays. Within the last month or two I have read articles on Glasgow which made me thank Heaven I am not as other men are, but that a merciful Providence was pleased that the accident of my birth should take place in Glasgow. Other writers, holding opposite views, have been analysing the city, its people, habits, and customs, and, behold! have found that they are not good. As if any city could bear such keen scrutiny!

To a large extent we judge cities as we judge eggs—from the outside. If that is fair and white we let it pass. But if on breaking through the surface we find rottenness, we say, "How dreadful!" and hurry away. You can look after the outside of an egg, and of a city, but the inside has to take care of itself.

You can say what you like about Glasgow.

You may call it all the bad names in your vocabulary. It won't mind. The only feeling that you will arouse will be one of pity for a man so short-sighted as not to recognise the greatness and the possibilities of Glasgow, and with so petty an understanding as to consider as faults what are cherished as rather fascinating eccentricities.

Outwardly, Glasgow is a centre of commercial life, in size second only to London in the United Kingdom, in enterprise second to none; Yankee in its hustling habits, and with the manners of a South Sea Islander. The streets are broad, paved with "cossies," flanked with handsome white and red stone buildings, built with a splendid disregard of expense. Along them the traffic roars, carts laden with bricks jostling beside the carriages of the West-enders, and everything making way for the electric cars, which seem bent on rivalling the speed of a motor on a non-stop race. The rich part of the city is very rich; the poor is very poor.

That is Glasgow as it strikes the outsider. The Glasgow man is too well known to need description. Take a London boy,

cheeky and precocious. Send him to a Scotch school to get all the cheekiness taken out of him; give him a year in Paris to get to know things; pack him off to Chicago to learn business habits, and you have the Glasgow man. In business his motto is—"Get there: honourably, *of course*, but——get there!" He judges a book by the number of copies sold, and his preference is for "something funny!" Usually, however, he reads only the evening papers, which are the largest, best, and cheapest in the world. He gets his politics from Joseph Chamberlain, and his religion from the *British Weekly*.

He is an indifferent sort of fellow for a companion on a journey, but he makes the best friend in the world. He spends his time trying to acquire wealth, and he acquires it only to spend it. He will haggle with a newsboy over a halfpenny change; but his alms are usually in silver.

If he doesn't go to heaven when he dies, he will make it very uncomfortable for the Devil.

Up in London the Glasgow man is ram-

pant. With his hat pushed far back on his head he bullies the unfortunate Sassenach, and with a fine insinuation conveys the impression that he is not as other men are, but a real, hall-marked Glasgow man, warranted to get there every time or die in the attempt. His ways are American, with the talk left out. He doesn't tell everybody what he is going to do. He does it, and tells them afterwards. He also tells them that nobody but a Scot, and a Glasgow Scot, could have done it.

Vulgarity is the prominent feature of Glasgow society. The love of display, of making a "show," of dressing loudly, these are Glasgow's peccadilloes. The Glasgow man is essentially democratic. There is no aristocracy except the aristocracy of wealth — the worst aristocracy of all. Some time ago I was waiting along with a group of people to get inside a tram car. Forgetting the customs of the city I stepped aside to let a lady out, thereby keeping several people from clambering aboard. Suddenly I was pushed forward—"Get in, wull ye?" said an irate female, "canna ye see yer hinderin'

us?" I crept inside, feeling that I had committed a very heinous offence.

There are few of the fine qualities about Glasgow. Its virtues are of the impressionistic school. They hit you in the face, as it were.

Several years ago Glasgow had an International Exhibition. "Of course," as they say in Glasgow, it was a tremendous financial success. This exhibition has left its mark on the city. While it was in its glory, Glasgow people, favoured by ideal weather, grew accustomed to an *al fresco* life, with beer and bands *ad lib.*, and now that it is over, they still keep up the habit. Scotch people take their pleasures sadly, it is said, but Glasgow folk are an exception. A Royal visit, a day of national rejoicing, a students' torchlight procession will bring them flocking from their houses into the streets to hold high carnival.

The only thing that keeps Glasgow from becoming the gayest of British cities is the execrable weather. As the old story says, it doesn't always rain in Glasgow—sometimes it snows.

Young Glasgow is a decent enough sort

of fellow, but a bit of a bounder. The girls are saucy and coquettish, whose *abandon* is kept within bounds by their ability to take good care of themselves. One writer has said that Glasgow girls spend their time in collecting for the Sustentation Fund, a work which the principal dissenting church has kindly set apart for their benefit. Their spare moments, at any rate, are spent in tea-rooms. Tea-rooms in Glasgow are not a convenience; they are a craze. There is one at almost every corner, and they all seem to pay. To those accustomed to the marble-topped table, penny-large-mug type of London tea-room, those in Glasgow come as a surprise. They are positively palatial. And if they are moderate in price, they are never cheap.

Class distinctions are not very noticeable. If a man and his wife are not absolutely "impossible," they run a good chance of gaining an *entrée* into the best society. Although it is a University town, learning and literature keep to the background. If a man be a jolly good fellow, few will refuse him an invitation merely because he is a professor or a literary man.

But Glasgow is essentially a city of suburbs. Everybody who is anybody lives out of town. These suburbs have each an individuality of their own. Kelvinside, for example, is redolent of severe respectability. It prides itself on its combination of wealth and culture. Its dinner parties are boring in the correct degree. Its taste in art and music is regulated by that of Belgravia and Mayfair. It goes to see the plays that have made a hit in a West End theatre. All this is as it should be, but the result is that Kelvinside is nothing if it is not very ordinary.

Dennistoun, in the far east, is of a different stamp. In that suburb you get a breeziness that reminds you of Rothesay and Dunoon in July. It is the suburb of pianos and perambulators; youthful, cheery, frank, and eminently Glasgow. Perhaps its only fault is that the people who live in Kelvinside usually live here first.

The South Side of the city is more cosmopolitan. Men who take delight in cultivating sweet peas and carnations live there. Those who have not a garden spend

their time pointing out to those who have what a waste of time rearing flowers is, to be sure. Some of them keep cats, which force home this truth to the men with gardens. There is nothing like a cat for taking the soul from the flower lover.

Glasgow goes early to bed at night. By eleven o'clock the streets are wellnigh deserted. Before that, however, there is considerable stir. Down Sauchiehall Street roams the blade with the cheap cigarette, and the eye for the fair sex, who, in their turn, are represented by giggling school-girls and damsels from behind the counter. Down Argyle Street stroll Jock and Jean, loud-voiced, bucolic, and aware that they have as much right to the pavement as anybody else. All the while the heavy electric cars roll and crash past, with clanging bells; growlers rumble over the cossies; lighter vans, driven by reckless small boys, chase aside the people who attempt to board the cars. It is like a corner of Bedlam, dazzling in its brightness, hopeless in its confusion, reckless in its gaiety. But sometimes it rains! Then if you can imagine a densely packed crowd,

a rolling sea of umbrellas, a swirl of traffic churning up the mud, an indescribable gloom, you will have Argyle Street when it is wet.

Moralists seem to take pleasure at times in holding up their hands at the dreadful state of drunkenness in Glasgow. While not denying that Glasgow consumes more strong drink than it ought (if only we all did exactly as we ought!), yet the state of affairs is certainly not so bad as some seek to make it out to be. For one thing, Glasgow has recently been blessed (some say cursed) with a bench of the most teetotal of teetotal magistrates. These estimable men gave orders that when the police saw a man "the waur o' drink" meandering along the street they should promptly run him in. This they did, and the police returns of drunks went up alarmingly, until a word from the Secretary for Scotland induced the magistrates and police to change their tactics, and Glasgow's return of drunks can now compare favourably with those of any other city.

Again, the out-of-door drunks in every

city are almost entirely composed of the poorer citizens, who are not the owners of comfortable homes to get drunk in like their more favoured brethren. In Glasgow the drunk does not keep to the poorer districts of the town, but claims his right to exhibit his insobriety in the West End, where the shocked Southerner sees him and makes a memorandum regarding the amount of drunkenness he has witnessed, and what a dreadful city Glasgow is, to be sure.

All licensed restaurants and public-houses in Scotland are closed at ten o'clock. Imagine it, ye Londoners! On a public holiday they are shut all day in Glasgow. You can get absolutely nothing to eat or drink on such a day unless you know people in the city from whom to beg a meal. Is it not preposterous? Do you go to the play? Then when it is over, get home, for you can enjoy no cosy little supper in town. The town is dark and deserted, save for gangs of belated revellers who have been drinking against time. I can quite believe that one day the Glasgow magistrates will issue an edict that no man

is to drink anything stronger than ginger ale save at a Corporation dinner.

My dear Glasgow man, why do you allow that insensate Corporation of yours to make such a fool of you? Londoners laugh at you. Yes, they do. On a recent Easter Monday your magistrates shut every place of refreshment in the city, and then provided an extra service of cars to take you out to Paisley, where the public-houses were open. The behaviour of the Glasgow "drouths" in Paisley was abominable. Paisley may well pray to be protected against the Glasgow magistrates.

As regards the general morals of the city, they are, I submit, much higher than those of any other city of size. Profligacy in its most flagrant forms is banished from the streets, and a demi-mondaine in a Glasgow street at night is as rare as a virtuous woman in some parts of London at the same hour.

You have all got your own opinions regarding the Scotch Sabbath, which nothing I could say would alter. Sunday in Glasgow is a Day of Rest. You can't work even if you want to, unless you are a

car conductor or a policeman. If you are a stranger you can't even eat, for every restaurant and tea-room is closed. You may go to church—there are plenty of them—or you may walk in the parks, to observe and be observed. If it be wet you must stay indoors, for no museum or gallery is open.* All this is owing to the high ideals of the City Fathers. If you stripped the coat from a Glasgow Bailie, you would find that his wings were sprouting—perhaps.

Still, with all his grumbling, the Glasgow citizen has a high opinion of his city. He takes an intense interest in its welfare, and seeks to promote the happiness of the world by telling other people what a grand city it is. "That is all very well," he will say to an enthusiastic member of another community, "but you should see how we do these things in Glasgow." Britain was recently urged to wake up. Glasgow has for long suffered from insomnia.

If Glasgow would only rub the rough

* I understand that steps are now being taken to have the Art Galleries opened on Sunday. How very dreadful!

corners off its citizens, it would be quite a desirable place to live in, at least for those whom an unkind fate has decreed should live in a city. As it is, it might be much worse.

Liverpool

LIVERPOOL is not a city, really; it is a river, and the houses, warehouses, shops, and streets on the banks all contribute to the power of, as they derive their own from, the Mersey, the repository of all the wealth and power of the district. When you go to Liverpool for the first time you feel that you ought to buy a peaked cap and reefer jacket, and walk with the roll of the deep-sea mariner.

The Mersey is wonderful. The channel, with its swift-flowing tide, churned into a perpetual foam by the heavy paddles of the ferry-boats, lapping the towering sides of the big liners and bulwarked with miles of docks, is the only thing of its kind in the world.

Liverpool is aware that the docks are the only part of the city that counts, and has made the Pierhead the focus of all the tramway routes. The Liverpool man lives

on shipping. When he is at work his brain is busy with bills of lading and charter-parties. His play he takes on the landing-stage, where he keeps one eye on the ferry-boats and the other on the girls. If he doesn't cry "Belay!" and "Avast!" it is because more expressive words are in use in Dockland.

The streets are rather narrow, not too well paved, and the buildings, unless they are insurance or shipping offices, are poor. The public buildings, of course, are exceptions; but Lime Street does not make up for the miles of houses like garden walls covered with advertisements.

The car service is excellent. Standing at the Pierhead (which reminds one somewhat of the square in front of the Bahnhof in Frankfurt), you see cars rattling in from all directions, one after another, all full, and each making as much noise as a train of waggons during shunting operations. They twist and turn, suddenly jerking in front of you, then, switching off again, go crashing off in another direction. They are calculated to give spasms to a man of a nervous temperament. Then there is the overhead

electric railway that runs down along the docks. As soon as a visitor arrives in Liverpool his friends hurry him off to show him this railway. As a candid friend I think they should instead take him in the opposite direction.

The Liverpool Corporation, in its endeavour to make men good by by-law, has views on the drink traffic and barmaids, and glories in its art treasures and galleries, the gift of a well-known brewer. Although not an æsthetic city, Liverpool affects a dilettante interest in art and culture, and does not allow the citizens to view its pictures after four o'clock. There are also to be found little coteries of people who aspire to be musical and literary, and who can tell the difference between a rondo and a fugue, an autobiography and an advertisement.

Fashionable Liverpool — those people who sun themselves in Bold Street and Lord Street of an afternoon—lives out Sefton Park way. There there are two classes—the people who can't forget the fact that they have a past, and those who try to make other people forget it. With

care and a satisfactory bank account there is no saying what London Road can do.

If you except everything that has to do with shipping and cotton, Liverpool is, commercially, rather slow. The people lack push. The shops are good, and the articles inside are better; but the shopkeepers are not adepts at their trade. You can go into a Liverpool shop without buying something you don't want. The ordinary man looks in the morning as if he had forgotten to shave. Still, he would have you never forget the phrase, "Manchester men and Liverpool gentlemen." He is just about as fond of Manchester as the Edinburgh folk are of Glasgow. But so long as Manchester has only got a ship canal, while Liverpool has the Mersey, the "gentlemen" are pleased to rest, complacent, with their superiority.

The youth of Liverpool is easily amused. To wear his Panama hat (one and sixpence-halfpenny at the Bon Marché), and stroll on the landing-stage, to the admiration of all the soap girls from over the water, is to him a very ecstasy of delight.

The young men are pretty much the

same as the young men all the world over, with the exception that the *genus* dude is noticeable by its absence. Those who would be reckoned men about town adopt a *blasé*, don't-care-a-hang attitude, drink gin and bitters, and are well up in shipping intelligence. What they don't know about the Grand National isn't worth knowing.

One can pay no city a higher compliment than to say that its young men are strenuous fellows—keen, good-humoured, and manly. I think I can safely pay Liverpool that compliment. But where does Liverpool keep all its pretty girls? The last time I was in Liverpool I had a bet with a lady on this question. I stood to lose the price of a pair of gloves if she could point out to me one really good-looking girl in Bold Street that summer afternoon. I was enabled to make this ungallant wager from the fact that the lady was a relative. One can be honest with relatives, but only honourable with friends. After wandering about for over an hour, and making little excursions into other streets, we discovered a pretty girl. My friend knew her and introduced me. I had to

buy the gloves, but I thought it was rather unfair, as the girl came from Chester.

The Liverpool accent is very distressing. It is a mixture of the objectionable features of all other bad accents. It is almost unintelligible enough to be reckoned a dialect.

On the whole, Liverpool is a quiet-living, decent city. It conducts its business as honourably as these twentieth-century exigencies permit of. It takes its pleasures *en famille*, and has a preference for pier concerts and Pierrots. It is not so Scotch as is London, but neither is it so English. It is a careful and judicious blend of the North and South, with a few virtues and vices peculiarly its own. There is money in it, but it does not parade its wealth. There is poverty in plenty, but it is hidden out of the way in the backwaters of Bootle —"brutal Bootle"—or in alleys off Scotland Road.

Along the banks of the Mersey are other little towns, which, parasite-like, derive their substance from Liverpool. Birkenhead, of course, is not one of these. A town with the biggest something or other in the world

—I think it is a dock—insists on being treated independently of others. He would be a bold man who would essay a knowledge of Birkenhead. Birkenhead is one of the dreariest, dirtiest, dingiest towns I ever saw. Viewed from the river it looks as though it had been burnt down years ago and never rebuilt. But New Brighton, Seacombe, Seaforth, Rockferry, Newferry, the place where they make the soap (the name will be inserted at usual advertisement rates), Eastham, and many other similar places are really parts of Liverpool, and should be reckoned as such.

These places are really country villages. I suppose in Liverpool they rank as suburbs. They are delightfully rural; their lanes, flanked with the greenest of hedges, are so charming and sweet that one can never believe that there is a great city at hand. But like all country villages they are given over to gossip. You can't live in Rockferry a week without everybody knowing far more about you than you do yourself. And if you go out of doors blinds will be drawn aside, your new hat remarked on, the shabbiness of your coat noted, and Mrs.

Jones and Mrs. Williams will tear you to pieces with that awful accent of theirs over their afternoon cup of tea. Everybody on that side of the river has something to do with soap. The place reeks of soap. The talk is all of soap and soapy people. If you stray far from your door you come upon a soap village with a soap church and a soap library, all presided over by a soap king. A far greater event than a general election is the putting on the market of a new soap from the soap factory. And if it's not soap it's glycerine.

The Liverpool man who goes to the Isle of Man whenever he gets a week-end to himself goes to New Brighton every night off, and enjoys the frivolities of the Tower. There he can watch monkeys or a music-hall performance, dance, or shoot the chute. On a fine afternoon he can see life as it is on the Ham and Egg Parade—like champagne kola, sustaining, perhaps, but not at all exhilarating.

The crowds that frequent New Brighton are, all things considered, about as orderly as I have seen anywhere. In the theatre, one night I was there, a huge lower middle-

class crowd had assembled half an hour before the curtain rose. In Glasgow the noise would have been appalling. At the Tower the people might have been Sefton Park plutocrats waiting for a classical concert to begin—which is very creditable to Liverpool.

Almost all the little towns in the vicinity of Liverpool boast of their pleasure-gardens and *al fresco* entertainments, but the ball-rooms enjoy the largest popularity. Certain people (there are many to be found in the North) may hold up their hands at the impropriety of promiscuous dancing, but, certainly, as it is indulged in in Liverpool and the neighbourhood, it seems one of the most innocent, if one of the least pleasurable, of amusements.

I know a man who thinks that there is no place in the world like Liverpool. He says he has found an oyster bar there where you can have Blue Points at twenty for a shilling. There is no accounting for tastes.

Manchester

A FRENCHMAN whose business led him to visit a number of English towns went to Manchester. Shortly before he arrived it commenced to rain, and it rained all the time he was there. On his next visit his experience was the same. When he went there the third time, and found that rain was again falling heavily, he exclaimed, "Mon Dieu! does it always rain here?"

They say in Liverpool that if you see a Manchester man without his boots and stockings you will find that his feet are webbed. But then Liverpool would have you believe that everybody in Manchester is a *quack!*

Manchester is a well-built, compact city, with noisy streets, thronged with electric cars, drays, carriages, and vehicles of every description. It is a large edition of Dundee, with more than a dash of Glasgow. The inhabitants, smart and business-like,

seem to consist almost exclusively of young men in a hurry.

The public buildings are imposing. Manchester possesses one of the largest railway stations in the kingdom, the oldest licensed house in the country—the "Seven Stars" in Withy Grove—and the Ship Canal.

The Liverpool people are not fond of the last. They tell how a young Liverpool man set out light-heartedly one day to sail to Manchester, some thirty-five miles. For a fortnight nothing was heard of him. Then his friends grew anxious, and sent telegraphic messages along the route. At last he was discovered at Barton Locks, about half-way. What had detained him is not related. Perhaps it was the odour, which is about as impenetrable as that of the Clyde at the Broomielaw on a summer's evening.

The adventuresome have other ways of getting from Manchester to Liverpool than by canal. I have heard of people who went by tram car. Although this is possible, I have never tried it. Life is too short for such antics.

The Corporation, like that of nearly every provincial town, is a most estimable body, with ideals which, although they may not be practical, are of the kind we are assured are the best. The Manchester man acquiesces in its findings, and goes on his way with his tongue in his cheek.

Manchester is musical and artistic. Its picture galleries, though small and hidden out of the way, contain a well-chosen and valuable collection. The dramatic taste of the people is, to say the least of it, comprehensive. One week you may see Shakespeare and grand opera and Gilbert and Sullivan distributed among the theatres. The last time I was there, "blood" and burlesque held the field. The following were billed :—"Why Men Love Women," "Why Woman Sins," "Mockery of Marriage," "King of Crime," "The Seal of Silence," "A Royal Divorce," "Under the Russian Flag," "The Belle of New York," "Just like Callaghan," "An Actor's Honour," "Man to Man," and five music hall shows.

A city that can stand that can stand—anything.

At Bellevue an entertainment is provided

dear to the heart of the Manchester man. Among other things there are mazes for him to get lost in. Why a Manchester man should pay to get muddled in a maze, when Victoria Station is free and open to all, is a question that cannot be answered.

There are a great many foreigners in Manchester—Jews, Armenians, and Greeks.

To those who remember the proverbial characteristics of the Hebrew, it seems a curious coincidence that the poorer Jews should live in Strangeways and their rich brethren at Cheetham Hill. There must be something in a name after all.

Manchester may be seen at its best round about St. Ann's Square of a fine afternoon. Everybody that is anybody makes a point of being there then. Market Street is the principal business thoroughfare and promenade for the shoppers from Plymouth Grove and Chorlton-cum-Hardy. When things are brisk in the cotton line these people remove to West Didsbury, or buy country houses in Cheshire.

The Manchester rough is a feature. He lives in Ancoats or All Saints (save the

mark!), but is a more harmless individual than the memory of the "Fenian Arch" days would lead one to suppose. A Manchester crowd is rather lively, but you must go to Wigan if you want to find the genuine, untamed savage in all his glory.

The manners of the city may be briefly summarised. There are none—except bad manners. The people are not vulgar. I have already said that they are artistic, and really artistic people can be vulgar only with difficulty. They are merely rude. The gentle cult of courtesy is entirely neglected. The business men are shrewd and hard-working. They are no dabblers in commercialism. They know the art by instinct. They are smarter than even Glasgow men are, but they take second place to Yankees because they can't lie so well. For all that, the Manchester man has a most vivid imagination. The Manchester Exchange is perhaps the busiest in the kingdom.

After hours, he is an outspoken, cheery, conceited fellow, with a propensity for spinning yarns and for drinking rather more than is good for him. He is all right

so long as you haven't to do business with him.

In relation to other people, Manchester acts up to the motto—"By their fruits ye shall know them." It doesn't matter what a man has been, how he made his money, in what way he will very probably lose it, whether in his daily actions he always dots his i's and strokes his t's. What matters is, what is he now? And, after all, it is not a bad motto to follow. For the average Manchester man, whatever he is, is seldom a snob.

The girls are altogether different. They are pretty, dashing, saucy. Their manner is frank and kindly, and they call a thing by the name it is usually known by. In short, they are everything except commonplace. They say in Manchester that all the girls there have weak backs. That is why they can't get any distance without having a masculine arm around them, as a slight support. It is as well to know that when you go to Manchester.

For a provincial town, life in Manchester is decidedly *rapide*. But it seems inevitable that every town have its Oxford Road.

And there is so much that is pleasing in Manchester that one likes to overlook its faults. Among all the cities in which I have lived, two stand out prominently as existing mainly for the making of money, and peopled with citizens who do not spare themselves in the making of it. One of these is Glasgow, and the other is Manchester. In these days when Britain's commercial supremacy is said to be at stake, much depends on both of them, and, if I judge them aright, they will take a lot of beating.

Dundee

An Impression

DUNDEE is an ugly town, with poor streets and unimposing shops. Grey weather, the haar from the North Sea, and the keen salt wind; roughly paved streets, grim high walls of prison-like mills, shrewd men of business, and hardy seamen from the whalers in the dock—that is Dundee. It lies cold and cheerless amid beautiful surroundings. A true northern town, full of grim realities, stern, somewhat forbidding; it is essentially Scottish.

Like Stockport, it is hilly. Until it stretches out by the riverside it is all climb, climb, climb. And the business men, clad in tweed, talk with the lilt of the hills. If you ask a policeman a question he will reply with the grave deliberation and *patois* of a Thrums villager.

But Dundee is not so sleepy as it looks. It can point to magnificent achievements. And if one wonders how it accomplished them it is because one does not understand Dundee. To-day we are apt to judge men by what they say they can do. Dundee should be judged by what it does. It is well governed by an enterprising and shrewd Corporation; as well governed, I should think, as the "model" city on the Clyde.

The Dundonian is shrewd, with the shrewdness of a Fifer. In business dealing his speech is "Ay, Ay" and "Na, Na." Like the Irishman's parrot, if he doesn't say much, he thinks a lot. And he gets there all the same.

Dundee is famous for jute and journalists. In Fleet Street every second man seems to come from Dundee. This is scarcely to be wondered at. Two large firms of newspaper proprietors have their head offices in Dundee, and the circulation of their papers is calculated in fractions of millions. One of the few readable Liberal papers in the kingdom hails from Dundee.

The Dundonian boasts a dual personality.

During business hours he is dour and rather shy. But when he plays he is a terrible fellow. On a Dundee holiday landowners for miles around close their estates. A contingent from the Scouringburn is as bad as an army on a plundering expedition, or a swarm of locusts.

I am told that Dundee is beginning to take an interest in art. It has already a college, which is part of St. Andrews University. Surely these are signs that it is becoming civilised!

The Dundonian is at heart a good sportsman. He usually carries about with him the smell of a fishing basket. His favourite book is "M'Call's Sporting Intelligence," and he can always let you have the latest from the *Pink 'Un*. It is unusual to find men so cautious commercially and with such speculative tendencies; so strongly reserved over a "deal," and so uproariously noisy over a game of billiards. The Dundee man has an educated taste in whisky. He is more discriminating than the Glasgow man, who prefers quantity to quality.

The man is fortunate who has to work

in Dundee if it is only because he can so easily get out of it. A few minutes in a train and he will find himself by the sea-shore where the wavelets lap gently over the shingle, and the water stretches across to the dim coast line opposite.

I can picture the Dundee man in the old days. His fight was against almost insurmountable difficulties. Away in the North he struggled to establish himself, to open up a trade with his fellow-men. He built a city. He had neither time nor money to make it beautiful. He had need of a home, so he raised four walls and covered them with a roof. And he sent his merchandise abroad, and the sea devoured it, and still he worked on. And the sons grew up, graver and more resolute than their father, and on the face of the race were engraven the lines hewn by success over adversity, And when days were dark and failure was near, he would leave his city and find inspiration in the gloomy woods around or by the side of the melancholy sea.

That is why the Dundee man appears to you as unsympathetic. That is why he

finds pleasure so strange a thing that he must drink of it to excess. At work he is a giant. At play he is a schoolboy, innocent, unthinking, noisy, and foolish.

It is a city in which to rear great men, pioneers. They will learn self-reliance from the whaling mariners, and grim determination from the spinning looms in the mills. And the bracing wind will make them grow straight and strong and rugged. And then, when your great man has reached maturity, take him away from Dundee, and put him in some virgin land where there are no public holidays or public-houses.

Continental Spas

PEOPLE of fashion go to Scotland to shorten the lives of tame birds, and to the Continent to lengthen their own. They do both because it is "the Correct Thing."

The Spas lay themselves out to cater for the people who starve one month so that they may gorge for eleven, and it must be admitted that they make the condition of semi-invalidism as pleasant as possible.

These watering-places differ from each other as widely as do Blackpool and Bettws-y-Coed. There is the exclusive, the more exclusive, and the absolutely prohibitive; the lively, the gay, and the giddy, and other grades which must be found out by experience. Speaking generally, the really ill go to Nauheim, a town of bath chairs and backaches. Those who want toning up go to such a place as Marienbad. Baden and Schwalbach are for the fashionable convalescent; Homburg for the aristocratic; Weisbaden for the upper

middle class with a *penchant* for fashion tempered with more or less lively amusement.

All these places boast of several mineral springs, some hot, some cold, some clear and sparkling, others dark and muddy, all calculated to cure everything from housemaid's knee to appendicitis, and all more or less reminiscent as to smell and flavour of rotten eggs. The correct thing to do on arrival is to consult a physician, who will advise the patient at which spring he should worship, and who will give directions as to how the "cure" is to be taken. As a rule these will run as follows :—

About half-past six a.m. the patient must get up, so as to be in attendance at the Springs at seven o'clock or thereabouts. There, along with scores more, he will present his glass to the maid to be filled, and then move off, imbibing the liquid through a glass tube, and listening to the inevitable band. When the King goes to Homburg, he may be seen any morning taking the waters, clad in a navy blue jacket and flannel trousers, and wearing a soft felt hat, and trying to look

as cheerful as he can, just like everybody else around him. That he is well looked after, however, was evidenced by the fact that a worthy German professor, who was discovered lurking among the surrounding trees in his desire to escape from the crowd, was arrested on suspicion of being a bloodthirsty anarchist, and had to prove his identity in the local police court.

After taking the water, a cup of coffee and a *brödchen* may be partaken of, followed by a short siesta. Then come the baths and massage treatment, if prescribed. These baths, muddy or clear, are exceedingly comfortable, and the half-hour spent in them is most enjoyable. Some time ago I took a course at Homburg, weighing myself at the beginning and at the end. To my surprise I had gained almost half a stone. As this is contrary to what is usual I made investigation, and, to my sorrow, found that in calculating the German weights in stones I had made an error, and that I had lost about a stone. Those, therefore, who weigh about as much as a well-trained jockey should abjure the baths.

After bathing may come a light breakfast or lunch, with the perusal of the English papers, which arrive only a day after issue.

When one goes to Germany one has to remodel all one's feeding arrangements. The German has two breakfasts—the first, a mere snack, the second, equivalent to our lunch. Then he sometimes has lunch, sometimes coffee (equivalent to our "tea"). After that, he has dinner. Before and after every meal he keeps off starvation by drinking mineral water, beer, light wine, or coffee, or, more often, a combination of all four. The motto of the German is, "When in doubt, eat."

In the afternoon the visitors arrange driving or walking parties, or pay calls, or, if it be not too hot, play tennis or golf. The Continental golf course is usually represented by an over-sized croquet green, with an arrangement of nets or bushes to serve as bunkers. The tennis courts at Homburg, however, are perhaps the finest in the world.

In the evening, dinner takes the first place. The local physician, with a shrewd

knowledge of just how far his patients will deny themselves, rarely interferes with the meal, or, if he does, he prescribes a diet with which not even the greatest gourmet could find fault.

After dinner the Kurhaus, with its illuminated gardens and expensive band, attracts the visitors, and the evening is spent in promenading to the strains of music, or sipping wine over a cigar or cigarette on the terrace. "Early to bed and early to rise" is the rule, and by eleven o'clock the streets and gardens are deserted, and the hotels and villas are full.

The most important institution in all the German watering places is the Kurhaus. It consists of Reading Rooms, Library, Billiard Rooms, a Ballroom, etc. At Homburg, the famous Gold Room, where the gambling took place before a considerate Emperor put a stop to it, is now transformed into a ballroom. People to whom the mention of a public ballroom calls up in their imagination such a place as may be found in the Isle of Man or in New Brighton, would be disappointed with

the somewhat solemn grandeur of the Kurhaus.

All visitors are taxed at the Continental Spas, and this tax includes the right of admission to the Kurhaus, except on certain gala nights, when an extra charge is made.

The knowing German makes his visitors pay for the attractions of the town, and in a back seat he may be found enjoying the fun gratis and for nothing.

Homburg depends for its existence on its visitors. When the King is there it is all life; when he goes elsewhere it is dull as ditchwater. You will have less difficulty in making yourself understood in Homburg than in Soho, provided you don't talk German. Before I found this out, I used to hesitate outside a tobacconist's shop, scanning a phrase book, and then go inside with a faltering "Ich wünsche—etwas cigaretten—zu kaufen," to be met with, "What kind of cigarettes do you wish, sir?"

Apropos of cigarettes, I had to smoke Russian and Turkish blends (which I loath) for a fortnight, because I could not get

Virginian cigarettes. At last I discovered in Frankfurt a shop, with tins of my favourite brand in the window.

"I want some Virginian cigarettes," I said.

"Virginian? We do not keep them."

"Oh, yes, you do! I want —— cigarettes."

"Ah! Zese are English cigarettes."

If you want Virginian you must ask for English, and you'll get them anywhere.

The visitor who goes to Homburg in search of amusement will probably be disappointed. Unless you are in a "set" there is not much to do. But the countryside is beautiful, and there are many interesting places to visit. Near Homburg are the famous Rosbach Springs, which London has long appreciated as a diluent for something stronger. I should recommend those who cannot afford to go to Homburg to buy a bottle of Rosbach, rise at 6.30 a.m., and, walking six times round their back garden, drink the water slowly. To heighten the effect they should bow to each rose bush and murmur, "Guten morgen, mein herr," or

"Your Highness." It will do them no end of good.

Weisbaden is a much larger and gayer place than Homburg. The Kurhaus gardens are splendidly laid out, and the people who go there include quite a number who would not have you understand that their ancestors go back to the time when men stole horses and sheep, and got hanged for their pains. The waters, however, are of the hot and brown variety, and are abominable.

Schwalbach, or, to give it its full name, Langenschwalbach, is a few miles distant from Weisbaden, up among the hills in a most charming situation. The village itself is old-fashioned and rather tumble-down, but the Springs and the Kurhaus are delightfully arranged. The essentials of a German Spa, it is as well to know, are a Spring, a Kurhaus, and a Kurhaus garden, containing a lake on which are, at least, a couple of swans and some smaller fowl.

The chief amusement at Schwalbach is to sit among the trees in the most comfortable chairs I have yet seen, and read, or

flirt, or gossip. As a holiday place it is the most sensible Spa I have lived at.

These Spas are at the mercy of the wind of popularity. Going through that district of Germany one is constantly coming upon little towns whose pristine glory is revealed only in the prefix "Bad-" to the name, and in the deserted Kurhaus. Such a town is Bad-Sodon. A mockery of its former gaiety is kept up. The Springs are there for those who would drink. A six-men-and-a-boy orchestra plays nightly to the worthy townspeople, who usurp the terrace of the Kurhaus to drink their Frankfurter or Pilsener. At times the gardens are illuminated with lanterns, and a few ghostly revellers wander disconsolately among the trees. Despite the attempt at gaiety it is all very solemn and sad.

Not far from Sodon, at the foot of the Taunus hills, is Falkenstein, the famous resort for those suffering from defective lungs. There invalids may sit out in the depth of winter, enjoying the sunshine, without being inconvenienced by the intense cold. Opposite Falkenstein is

Königstein, both villages lying on the slopes of two ridges, and clustering round their respective castles, which, even yet, are solid pieces of masonry, and are both undermined with subterranean passages. In the good old days the opposition nobles used to gather their villeins together and fight it out on the open space at the foot of the ridges. Now all is given up to the almighty visitor, who will be as struck by the quaint Rip Van Winkle-like appearance of the keeper of Königstein as he will be delighted with the flavour of the wines in the queer little inns.

German Spas are an acquired taste, and a lot depends on how one takes them. If you go filled with a conscientious desire to come back rejuvenated, and spend your days in strict adherence to medical advice, you will most probably come back disappointed. If, on the other hand, you go to enjoy yourself in the *al fresco* manner that the delightful climate renders possible, and do not allow your conscience to worry you too much if one morning you may chance to neglect your mineral bath for a promenade with one of the very pretty

women who visit such places, you will agree that undergoing a cure is at least as enjoyable as shooting grouse, in the rain, on a Scottish hillside.

The Church

In these days when it is so easy to be a martyr the man is to be pitied who does not live within the jurisdiction of the Education Act. The unfortunate Scottish dissenter who lives in amity and peace with the disciples of the State Church misses half the fun. He has a vague idea that the High Churchman is a good fellow with a large stipend and a *penchant* for incense and wax tapers, and that the Nonconformist is to be found addressing agitation meetings in Hyde Park when he isn't holding forth to a little congregation of enthusiasts in a building somewhere up a side street. It appears to him that when a man hasn't enough money to live without doing anything, and isn't bad enough for the army, and hasn't enough brains for business, he goes into the Church, and that the man who would have been a showman or an auctioneer if his people had allowed

him, and who has got into a bad mood long ago, and can't get out of it, becomes a Nonconformist parson.

Of course this is all wrong, but it is the impression one gets by reading the papers.

Up in Scotland things are quite different. To look at a clergyman in the street you could not tell whether he was an Auld Kirker or a Wesleyan Methodist. Those who wear the cloth love in amity to dwell, play golf together, exchange pulpits, borrow each other's sermons for aught I know, and generally behave like reasonable men.* All this is as it should be, and consequently up in Scotland we have a high opinion of our clergy, who, in their turn, have a higher opinion of themselves.

But just as those in Scotland have formed what is probably a wrong idea of what an English clergyman is by reading the newspapers, so you who live in England can

* The above was written before the decision of the House of Lords on the Scottish Church case. To-day, I think there are signs that the present miserable state of affairs will soon be put right and forgotten. The spectacle of a few ignorant and perverted ministers, intoxicated with their success in the Courts, grabbing churches all over Scotland, is not one to dwell upon.

have but a warped opinion of the Scottish minister. I have no doubt, for you have all read Barrie and Ian Maclaren and Crockett, that you think a Scotch divine, when he isn't walking round his glebe with his silvery hair floating in the breeze, and the smell of the heather in his nostrils, is tramping up a hillside through snow and sleet to watch by the bedside of Jock or Sandy, who is a crofter or something you will rarely meet—except in novels. I do not deny that such things may be done occasionally by the Scotch minister, but he does them as rarely as he speaks braid Scots.

The Scotch minister is a University man, who has distinguished himself in debates, who was probably a president of the Union in his time, who knows a good thing in silver or copper mines when he sees it, who has given up all his bad habits, and who reads deeply in the Higher Critics and tries to forget what he has read. He spends his time principally between preparing his "discourse," pacifying his manager or deacons, and wondering how he can raise the Sustentation Fund.

His "discourse" is the principal item. If he be a man of weight, it will be laden with the spoils of Wellhausen and Wendt, pulpit commentaries, and the latest thing from the Critics. A less conscientious man will be content with a dip into the newest editions from Hodder & Stoughton, and a few excerpts from a Bible Illustrator, while the man who would draw the crowd takes as his text, "How to be Happy in Lodgings," "After the Honeymoon," or something of that sort. When it is written and divided into heads, and subdivided into "Lastly," "One word more," and "In a few words," it has to be carefully prepared so that not one point in the whole half-hour or forty-five minutes may fail to be well set forth and forced home.

Besides the work of preparing one or two of these monuments of industry every week, the Scotch minister has usually to attend a meeting of elders on Monday evening, of deacons or managers on Tuesday, conduct a prayer meeting on Wednesday, look in at a tea meeting on Thursday, give a few words at a mothers' meeting on Friday, and address a Band

of Hope on Saturday. So that he won't have time to weary, thoughtful members of his congregation organise Christian Endeavour societies, literary societies, young men's and young women's societies, and invite and expect his attendance at them all. When you include every week an average of two weddings, three funerals, half a dozen occasions for comfort and advice, each necessitating an hour's visit and unlimited patience, you see that to be a Scotch minister isn't exactly a picnic. To add to all this he has a choir, phenomenally sensitive to supposed slight and insult, sopranos that get married, and tenors that can't sing, half a dozen people who write anonymous letters saying that the church is going to the devil, and that the minister is there already, or words to that effect, and people who are leaving to go to the church round the corner where there is a minister who squints different ways with each eye, and is consequently very clever.

Then there is the "long" prayer. I wish every minister would impress upon his memory the following extract from

"The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford":—

> "In all the religion of that day nothing was falser than the long prayer. Direct appeal to God can only be justified when it is passionate. To come maundering into His presence when we have nothing particular to say is an insult, upon which we should never presume if we had a petition to offer to any earthly personage. We should not venture to take up his time with commonplaces or platitudes; but our minister seemed to consider that the Almighty, who had the universe to govern, had more leisure at His command than the idlest lounger at a club. Nobody ever listened to this performance."

I have great sympathy for the average minister, and I don't wonder at so many going over to the Roman Catholic Church. A parson can only expostulate. A priest can tell a man that if he doesn't look out he'll give him six years extra in Purgatory, without the option of a fine. I would almost rather be a Secretary of State for War than a modern parson. I suppose the case of the English clergyman is the same, but then he has usually got a curate or two on whom to cast the blame if he turns up a week late to a funeral owing to a mistake in dates,

and is told that the corpse wouldn't keep, while his Scotch brother has only got his beadle, and he is a dignitary to be treated with profound respect.

What Messrs. Maclaren, Crockett & Company could have done without the "meenister's man" it is difficult to imagine. He was wont, you remember, to appear before the minister in the vestry and give his words of solemn warning or advice, which the minister always took with bowed head, instead of gathering up his gown and kicking the fellow out. Or he would be so bold as in time of trouble to visit the minister in the manse and say that if there was to be a Disruption he would go out too, ay, though he had lived in the clachan and his forbears before him since the Flood, as it were. And the minister would rise up and grip his faithful beadle's hands as in a vice, with an utter disregard for the poor fellow's fingers, and make reply with broken accents as though his mouth was full of oatcakes and buttermilk.

All that may have happened in the old days, but *tempora mutantur*, and now the beadle is a spruce fellow with a nice evening

dress suit, who is never to be found when the time comes for him to take up "the books," and who can't be sacked, because he is on intimate terms with half the congregation, and if he went they would go too.

Ministers are like game. They improve with age, but you mustn't keep them too long. A young minister is like new wine. He looks all right, but there is no "body" in him. When he gets enough sense to have his hair cut short, and to leave poetry out of his sermons, and to forget that he is something very little short of the angels, he is all right, but that process takes years.

Then you have the grave and reverent divine, a man of mark, a D.D., whose word is law, whose frown means perdition, and who is like a chapter out of the Book of Lamentations.

Of another order is the brisk man with a fund of stories culled from the *repertoire* of Dean Ramsay, a loud laugh and a knack of getting one to rise at an unearthly hour on Sunday mornings to attend extra meetings.

The meek man has the worst of it.

Bullied by his session, terrorised by angry members of his congregation who want to know why that solo was sung and when he is going over to the Catholics, made generally miserable by the sneers and open attacks of all those godly people who won't leave his church because they'd be snubbed elsewhere, he must be right glad when he exchanges the church for the churchyard.

I have no delusions regarding clergymen. I have been at college with many budding divines and I accordingly distrust the cloth. There are exceptions. My best friend is a clergyman. But I will say this, that if clergymen have faults, the laymen in the Church have ten thousand more. Why is a Church another name for strife and schism and self-righteousness? We are told the Church is losing its hold. If that be so then our plight is a serious one. The Church is not losing its hold on the people. There are hundreds who never enter the door of a religious house and who would fain do so, but they refuse to meet the people they will find there. I fear that church attenders do not realise their responsibility on this matter. Do

you attend church, reader? If so, are you a man of rectitude on Monday as well as on Sunday? I do not mean, are you moral? You do not need to go to church to be moral. But are you careful in these little details of upright dealing? Are you courteous, charitable? If you are not, then you are a danger to your church. Don't shake your head and say, "We are all sinners." You have no right to be a sinner. In your heart you are quite sure you are very far from being a sinner. I don't expect perfection in you. But I do expect you to come up to the standard of those hosts of people who never go to church. Oh! your self-deluded impostor.

There is another class of church-going folk, those who go because it is "the Correct Thing," or go to flaunt their finery. They close their ears and open their eyes. Those are the people who talk about "beautiful" services. I regret that such people are usually women. You silly women! rustling into your pew and bending gracefully over the desk, do you realise that you are insulting the Deity?

I wonder how many who read this will take it to apply to themselves. I venture to think not one. And yet I know it applies to most of you.

Do not mistake me; I am not defending those who never go to church. I am attacking those who do.

Were Thackeray alive he would have written on our church snobs. I confess my pen is not equal to the task.

The Stage

"Ay, my boy," said the low comedian, sipping his sherry and bitters, "that is all very well, but I remember in '76 when I was playing 'Roger Queerboy' with poor old Dick Porter as 'Timothy Tight' I did as smart a thing myself. We were on the road with a fit-up—ah! things were different then. Why! in the seventies Bertie Fitzreginald travelled with a fit-up in the same company as Lotty Lightly. They were married in Slocum the week before I was there, and the event was still the talk of the town. All the fellows in the place made love to Lotty, but she stuck to good old Bert. Fine girl, Lotty. Quite different from the crowd you get now. I remember when she and I and Bert used to have stout and oysters after the show at Milbury. Gad! what rousing times we had. But what was I going to tell you about?"

"The fact is," interrupted the juvenile lead, examining his classic features in an advertisement mirror opposite, "there's too much importance put on the town and too little on the provinces. People say you can't see a decent show out of London. Bah! there's better men on tour than you'll find in London west of Temple Bar. Now, take Dibbs. He can't sing; everybody knows that. He can't act; he knows that himself. If it weren't for his tailor he'd be a fright. Yet everybody goes to see him play; and sends him picture post-cards to sign. I'm sick of it all."

"This is very poor whisky," said the tragedian, with a sigh.

"You won't remember dear old Walter Bones?" inquired the low comedian.

"Watty! I should think I do," cried the juvenile lead, peering into a beer bottle to see if there was any left. "I played with him in *Hamlet*."

The low comedian shook his head wearily.

"No, you didn't," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"Watty never played in *Hamlet*."

"I tell you he did. He was first gravedigger."

The low comedian smiled in a superior fashion.

"I ought to know, since I played with him," continued the juvenile, abandoning the beer bottle as a thing from which all joy had fled.

"Rot!"

"It's evident you don't know Walter."

"Good heavens, man, know Walter! Many a time I've called on him and said to him, 'Look here, Watty, lend me a fiver'—or five bob, as the case might be—and he's given it me as free as air. *He* was the right sort, I tell you."

"Well, I tell you, I've played with him."

The two men glared at each other, and the tragedian shifted uneasily in his seat.

"Pass the water," he said. "This is very poor whisky."

"Never in your life."

"Don't you believe what I say?"

"You're either mistaken or you're getting drunk."

"Well—" a long pause. "I'd like to see the money you got from Walter Jones."

"Bones."

"What?"

"I said Walter Bones."

"Oh—h—h! I beg your pardon. I thought you said Jones. Ah! Walter Bones. He *was* a good sort."

"You haven't played with him in *Hamlet*, have you?" suspiciously.

"Never!"

"He's dead now."

"Ah! he was a good sort."

"One of the best."

They drop tears into their empty glasses.

The tragedian let his eyes wander round the bar.

"They keep very poor whisky here," he said.

There was a long pause.

"But it's better than none," he added.

Actors are like elderly spinsters. They live in the past. Until an actor can talk of the good old days, when he was along with dear old Bobby and good old Jack, and that fine fellow, Jim, he is not an actor at all, but only a novice. To an actor

everybody that is dead and out of the road is a good sort; everybody that is still alive and on the boards is an impostor. The jealousy that seems to form part of the artistic temperament is developed in the actor to an extraordinary degree. He does not wish ill to befall his more successful comrade—he is not so bad as that—but he envies his success, which is pardonable, and he thinks that if he had only the chance he could do far better himself—which is probably true. In all walks of life it is terribly difficult for those who are struggling at the foot of the hill to be genuinely pleased at the success of their friends at the top. Moralists beseech the man who has got on to be kind to those he knew in the old days. There is no honour in that. But it is a great thing when the failure rejoices at the success of his friend. In stageland so much depends on opportunity that we can hardly wonder if the poor frequenter of Maiden Lane sighs enviously when he sees the name of an old comrade writ large on the bills.

Actresses are the greatest sinners in this respect. I know one actress who upset a

whole scene because the juvenile lead, who had been newly given the part, got a recall where that was unusual. I know they look as nice and gentle and loving as can be, but behind the scenes they can play the deuce when they like.

The greatest compliment one actor can pay another is to call him a "real artist." There are not many "real artists" on the stage. No one should be an actor who has not either private means or strong business aptitude and dogged perseverance. If you have a friend who wants to go on the stage, beseech him to try something else. Let him rather take off his coat and become a labourer. Ask any actor and he will tell you the same. It is a terrible calling, precarious, badly paid, and conducive to the propagation of all one's worst qualities. If your friend goes on the stage the least calamity that can befall him is that he will become a monument of conceit.

I am not ignorant of the good qualities of the actor. I know he will share his last shilling with his friend, and generosity like this is hard to find. I know he is

optimistic and cheery when most of us would be in despair. Those who rant about the immorality of the stage talk of what they know nothing about. Of course there are immoral men and women on the stage. And their names are bandied about by prurient people to such an extent that the unthinking believe that to be an actor is to be vicious. That is a cruel and heartless lie. The proportion of bad men and women on the stage is no greater than in any other calling. And if I admit that the temptations on the stage are tremendous that is only paying a higher tribute to the character of the actor and actress.

Still, like every one of us, the actor has very many serious faults. I have said he is jealous. He is also unbusiness-like to an almost criminal extent. In the days of my youthful innocence I once made a contract with a theatrical manager—not one of those commercial plutocrats with a theatre in the West End and a stud at Newmarket, but one of those genuine actors who are here with a company to-day and to-morrow are gone for ever; and I have made a vow that the next time I do

anything so rash I shall engage a select committee of experts who have had experience of the mysteries of the profession to stand by me. And I should advise all other ordinary people who sometimes mean what they say and hold by their agreements to do the same.

It is dangerous to write anything against the stage and its devotees. The offending scribe runs the risk of being prevented from entering a theatre, and is described as a mountebank who would tarnish the glory of the greatest profession, and besmirch the fair names of Thalia and Melpomene. For the drama of to-day is a thing that matters. We have illustrated interviews with its exponents by the score, critics who do nothing else but write seriously about the interpretation of impossible characters by impossible artists, and the public read greedily details of how Miss Dolly Flightly pays twenty guineas for her boots, has been twice divorced, and is going to marry Lord Quex, how she used to recite *Casabianca* before she was ten, and so on. And we go to the theatre and watch the bowing actor-manager on

the stage, with the curtain running up and down, the band hammering out a loud chord, and the audience applauding might and main, and we come away with the idea that we have seen a very god come to earth, instead of an ordinary mortal who is earning an honest living, and doing his best, very probably, which is to be expected of him. We cannot blame the actor if he becomes insufferably conceited and self-important. It is our own fault.

On the stage, we are told, we see the moods and phases of real life. This, everybody knows, is nonsense. A drama of "real life" would not run a week on the boards. On the stage the heroine is a sweet, lissome girl whom one would never suspect of drinking bottled beer in the wings, and whose innocence is positively idyllic. The hero is a fine, manly youth, who usually wears a straw hat, indoors and out, and has a nice crease down his trousers. He is poor, handsome, with a taking way of making love. The villain is dark, with pale face, cruel eye, and curling moustache. The comedians are Sunny Jims, whose prototypes we never

see, thank Heaven! in real life. The men of fashion play with epigrams in a way never heard in Mayfair or Belgravia. The adventuresses would not be tolerated at Piccadilly Corner.

Off the stage, on the other hand, the man who weds the girl is something in the City, with a good bank account—the sort of man who puts on an old coat when he is at home, and is generally accounted "safe." The girl is only comfortably innocent. The villain is a pleasant-speaking fellow, who gets you to become a shareholder in a rotten concern, or borrows your money, and is off round the corner before virtue can triumph over vice. The funny fellows have a knack of cracking jokes at inopportune times, and are discouraged in well-ordered households. These people would never make a successful play, so playwrights invent a bizarre little world of their own. It is very pleasing; but what is the good of calling it real life?

So much has been written about the stage that I fear an apology is needed for these additional remarks. The sordid

discomfort of touring, the tiresome Monday morning rehearsals, the preparatory rehearsals with stupid casts and frantic stage manager, the wealth of those at the top and the poverty of those at the foot, are not all these things set down in books and magazines by the score? Since the days when my lord of Blankton's strolling players were kicked from village to village because of setting fire to the hayloft, which was their headquarters and hostel, we have progressed considerably. Now we get our fashions, our politics, our morality, our peeresses from the stage, and I do not know if it were not better we left them there. An opinion which very many people will take to be exceedingly ill-natured, and entirely wrong.

Law

THE legal profession is divided into two classes. The first—the Bar—is eminently respectable, and about as lucrative as an agency for flying-machines. The second is composed of that heterogeneous mob known as solicitors, writers, notaries, attorneys, or law agents. The whole are euphemistically called "lawyers," ignoring the fact that volumes of Blackstone, Erskine, or Bell, and a series of law reports do not make a lawyer.

The profession has a lot of hard things said about it. John Smith, having an ancestor who was born in Scotland, who lived ten years in Timbuctoo, where he married and made a will, and other ten at Utal, where he was divorced according to the customs in vogue there, fancies that he may raise objections to the will or to the divorce, and consults his man of business on the matter. He is wroth because the poor solicitor tells him to call back in a day or two, when he has had time to look

up *Fenton* v. *Livingstone* and *Pemberton* v. *Hughes*, and a score more authorities, and he cries aloud on the injustice of the consultation fee. Perhaps he expected his solicitor, who knew a thing or two about small debt cases, but to whom the intricacies of private international law were as intelligible as a Board of Trade report, to answer "right off the reel." If he did, he knows better now. The solicitor will think over the matter, write a few letters on the subject, consult counsel, write more letters, and then give his opinion. And he can't be expected to do that for nothing. To keep a racing stud or a steam yacht is not to be compared with a good-going lawsuit, as far as expense is concerned. Still, for the sporting man, the latter has its attractions.

Brown and Jones may make a contract, and then go to law over the head of it. The text books may say that the contract is illegal. Chief Justice Drowsey in *Bunkum* v. *Greene* may have held that it is perfectly legal. On appeal, the House of Lords may have reversed the judgment, but added that if such and such had been complied with, then so and so would have

resulted. Brown thinks the contract will hold. Jones disputes this and is made defendant. The result is a leading case and the impoverishment of Brown. It is a case of "evens on the field." An easier way of solving the difficulty is "Heads I win, tails you lose." But it isn't so exciting.

Every lawyer, say the wits, shall have his portion. The following little bill, which is a fair sample, shows how he gets it:—

May	1—	To conferring with you *re* depredations caused by Mr. Jones' cat in your garden,	£0	6	8
,,	2—	,, Writing Mr. Jones, as directed by you,	0	6	8
,,	10—	,, Writing you that we have received your reply from Mr. Jones,	0	3	4
,,	15—	,, Calling on Mr. Jones, and finding him not at home,	0	6	8
,,	16—	,, Writing you and requesting call,	0	3	4
,,	18—	,, Conferring with you,	0	6	8
,,	19—	,, Writing Mr. Jones, threatening proceedings,	0	6	8
,,	23—	,, Writing you and reporting,	0	3	4
,,	26—	,, Drawing petition (2 sheets),	0	12	0
,,	28—	,, Meeting you, going over same, and conferring,	0	6	8
,,	29—	,, Extending petition,	0	3	0
,,	30—	,, Paid dues,	0	5	0
June	5—	,, Recalling summons on Mr. Jones intimating that he has not got a cat,	0	2	6
,,	7—	,, Conferring with you as above,	0	6	8
		,, Outlays,	0	5	0
			£4	4	2

LAW

The lawyer of the three-volume novel was a kindly old man with iron-grey hair and steel-grey eyes that pierced the soul of the villain and dwelt lovingly on the fair curls of the unfortunate girl on whom the villain had designs. He acted the part of private detective, general comforter, and avenger of infamy. He was always taking long journeys from London into Blankshire, arriving just in time to be too late. The type is freely portrayed in the works of Wilkie Collins and Mrs. Henry Wood. Now we have changed all that. The lawyer of to-day is a young man with a bald spot on the top of his head, a thin face, somewhat blue with much shaving, a knowing look in his eye, a cutaway tail coat, and a seedy-looking silk hat. He usually carries a brief bag, which may contain important papers or a sixpenny reprint.

You can scarcely tell the difference between a barrister and a solicitor, except that the former is usually thinner, balder, and bluer.

The ambitious strive for the Bar. A barrister may become Lord Chancellor.

There are likewise the wig and gown. These are also assets, and when the worst comes to the worst, they can be sold to some one who has got a ticket for a Covent Garden ball. In Parliament House or in the Royal Courts of Justice may be seen every day scores of men who would never have been advocates or barristers had it not been for the wig and gown.

The Courts are not the place to hear eloquence. Occasionally a legal luminary may appear on the tapis and deliver a rousing speech, but in general a Court is as dull as ditchwater. The judge scratches with his quill when he isn't nodding over his desk. The jury sit dreaming of their offices or shops, and wondering what pranks their staff will be up to in their absence. The counsel, with wigs awry, turn over the leaves of books of reference or consult with the agents who have instructed them. Then one rises to his feet.

"M'Lud," he says "the plaintiff, m'lud, —er—in the first place—ah—we have here, m'lud—that is to say—it is wrong to suppose—er—in fact, it has been laid down in

the case of—ah—er—in the case of—ah—." And so on.

The only interested people in Court are the parties to the action, and they, after all, are of but little importance as far as the Court is concerned.

A barrister must not advertise. He cannot treat with clients direct. He cannot sue for his fees. If he gets hard up, he either writes for the legal journals, which don't pay, or for the cheap weeklies, which do. All the time he is praying that some of his friends may get divorced, or murder each other, and that he may be chosen to represent the living or the dead. He that would pursue the law and its profits must have two qualifications—unlimited patience and a small appetite.

Some curious ways have been adopted of getting up a name. Not very long ago a young barrister in London got a brief. There were about five counsel on his side, and he was the fifth. At last he got a chance to speak, and immediately fell foul of the bench. He was told to be more careful. Drawing himself up, he declared that he represented his client and that

nothing on earth would make him give way. The judge said he wouldn't sit there and be talked to like that, etc., etc. The barrister said that the judge could do as he jolly well liked for all he cared. Things were lively for a few minutes, and then the atmosphere in the Court grew cooler. In the bills of the evening papers was emblazoned—"The Blankshire Case: Scene between Counsel and Judge." The case took up four lines and the scene three-quarters of a column. The fifth man is now working overtime, and is counted a rising man.

There is many a man who ate his dinners in hall with as hopeful a heart as ever beat below stuff gown who is sitting to-day in Brick Court or Harcourt Buildings twiddling his thumbs, and wondering whether he shouldn't become a commercial traveller and secure at least a pound a week or thereabouts, or propose to a rich attorney's elderly, ugly daughter. The supply of the latter, however, is very far short of the demand.

Printed by William Hodge & Co., Glasgow and Edinburgh.